

## 1997 FATAL VICTIMS UNDER FOUR YEARS OF AGE

From January through December 1997 there was a total of 33 children under four years of age killed in traffic collisions. In 13 of the deaths, no safety seat was used and/or present; 9 were in improperly used safety seats; and only 4 were in safety seats that were correctly used. (In the other 7 fatalities, safety seats were present but not used [2], use was unknown [3] or only adult belts were used [2].)

In the collision summaries, this symbol (☆) after the date indicates that the victim was Hispanic or had an Hispanic surname. 42.4 percent of the fatal victims (14) were in this category.

### VICTIMS BY YEAR

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>INJURED</u>
1997	33	3,036
1996	35	3,626
1995	59	3,817
1994	56	4,127
1993	48	4,357
1992	59	4,705
1991	70	4,793
1990	64	5,109
1989	43	5,102
1988	60	4,855
1987	66	4,792
1986	50	4,212
1985	53	4,050
1984	57	4,177
1983	60	4,273
1982	46	4,679
1981	58	4,716
1980	47	4,652

### 27360 CITATIONS (CHP ONLY)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1997	14,866
1996	15,516
1995	15,359
1994	16,060
1993	18,797
1992	21,578
1991	24,190
1990	21,476
1989	18,420
1988	15,196
1987	15,473
1986	12,620
1985	14,593
1984	11,879
1983	6,315*

\*(1983 CITES STARTED 4/1/83)

## **1997 FATAL VICTIMS UNDER FOUR YEARS OF AGE**

[The following is the format for the information contained in these reports.]

DATE TIME/CITY/COUNTY/. VICTIM. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT.  
RESTRAINT USE

### **JANUARY**

- 01 1730/Uninc./San Bernardino. **1-YR-OLD MALE**. Driver (father) allowed vehicle to drift into the dirt median, overcorrected and lost control. Vehicle overturned ejecting child.  
**SAFETY SEAT PRESENT BUT NOT USED/PREVENTABLE**
- 12 2345/Uninc./Riverside. **3-YR-OLD FEMALE**. Driver (mother) allowed her vehicle to drift into the dirt median, overcorrected and lost control. Vehicle overturned ejecting child.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**
- 18☆ 0200/Downey/Los Angeles. **1-YR-OLD MALE**. Driver rear-ended slower vehicle (pickup truck). Impact caused the pickup driver to lose control and overturn. Child was seated unrestrained in the front seat of the pickup.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**
- 23 1745/La Mesa/San Diego. **1-YR-OLD MALE**. Driver was entering the freeway from an on-ramp when the vehicle spun due to wet pavement and smooth tires. Second vehicle, carrying the unrestrained child between the front seats, was struck in the side by the first vehicle. After the impact the second vehicle's door opened, ejecting the child.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

### **FEBRUARY**

- 01☆ 1258/Bell/Los Angeles. **2-YR-OLD FEMALE**. Driver suddenly stopped for unknown reasons. Three other vehicles were unable to stop and collided. Impact caused a fire which engulfed the third vehicle containing child and her parents.  
**UNKNOWN**

## **FEBRUARY** (Continued)

- 16☆ 1450/Uninc./Merced. **1YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (mother) with a suspended license drove into an intersection without stopping for a stop sign. Her vehicle was hit broadside by a second vehicle. The impact caused the first vehicle to overturn ejecting all three children sitting unrestrained in the back seat. Child was sitting, unbuckled, in a child safety seat.

**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

## **MARCH**

- 12 0605/Oceanside/San Diego. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (mother) allowed her vehicle to drift onto the shoulder of the road, then overcorrected and spun into an oncoming vehicle. Child was sitting in the front seat on a child safety seat, but was not buckled into the seat.

**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

## **APRIL**

- 05P 1630/Uninc./Fresno. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (father) observed smoke coming from the cigarette lighter, slowed the vehicle and pulled to the right. While the vehicle was still moving 5-10 mph, the right rear passenger opened the right front door to exit the vehicle and the child, sitting on his mother's lap in the right front seat, fell out of the car and struck his head on the pavement suffering fatal injuries. There was no collision.

**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

## **MAY**

- 07P 0711/Uninc./Riverside. **2-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver (15-year-old unlicensed aunt of victim) was late for an appointment and driving at a high rate of speed while swerving around slower traffic. During these movements, she lost control of her vehicle which crossed over the center line and struck a second vehicle head on. The impact broke her vehicle into two parts, both of which overturned and struck other vehicles causing fatal injury to the child.

**SAFETY SEAT/MASSIVE IMPACT**

### **MAY** (Continued)

- 10 1910/Escondido/San Diego. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver under the influence of marijuana did not yield to a stop light and struck the second vehicle. Child was a passenger in the second vehicle and was seated on the right front seat. The child was riding in a safety seat which had been placed in the rear-facing position with the back of the seat resting on the air bag module cover. The impact of the crash caused the air bag to inflate causing fatal injuries to the child.  
**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

### **JUNE**

- 14☆ 0205/Uninc./San Bernardino. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver (mother) had been driving over 16 hours when she fell asleep and allowed her vehicle to spin, cross the center divider, and strike an oncoming vehicle. Child was ejected while sitting unrestrained in a child safety seat.  
**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

- 21 0104/Commerce/Los Angeles. **2-YR-OLD FEMALE.** DUI driver, operating his vehicle at a high rate of speed, failed to slow for several vehicles stopped in the roadway because of a previous collision. Driver struck vehicle which contained the child.  
**ADULT BELT ONLY/PREVENTABLE**

### **JULY**

- 04☆ 1208/Uninc./Madera. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** DUI driver did not stop for a stop sign and struck the second vehicle killing several members of the same family including the child. Child's seating position was unknown.  
**UNKNOWN**

- 04 1906/Uninc./San Joaquin. **2-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver [mother] was allowing her vehicle's wheels go off the road at 65 mph so the vehicle would slide, "just for fun," when she lost control and the vehicle overturned. The four unrestrained children were ejected from the vehicle suffering a range of injuries including one fatality.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

- 05 1515/Uninc./San Bernardino. **2-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver [father] drifted to the side of the roadway, overcorrected and lost control. Vehicle slid into the center divider and overturned, ejecting the child.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

## **JULY (Continued)**

- 10☆ 1055/Oxnard/Ventura. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver [baby sitter] entered an intersection and a second vehicle failed to stop at the stop sign and struck the first vehicle broadside. Child was seated in the right front passenger seat buckled into the adult lap/shoulder belt because her mother hadn't left a child safety seat when she left her child with the baby sitter.

**ADULT BELT ONLY/PREVENTABLE**

- 20 0538/Uninc./San Bernardino. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver allowed his vehicle to drift into the dirt median, overcorrected and lost control. Vehicle overturned ejecting child.

**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

## **AUGUST**

- 03 1155/Uninc./Kings. **2-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver did not stop for a stop sign and struck second vehicle broadside. Child was unrestrained in second vehicle seated at the point of impact.

**NO SAFETY SEAT/MASSIVE IMPACT**

- 09☆ 1630/Uninc./Imperial. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Vehicle was struck head-on when a DUI driver crossed over the center line. No safety seat in vehicle.

**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

- 16 1808/Uninc./San Joaquin. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (father) allowed his vehicle to drift over the center line and strike an oncoming vehicle head on. Child was seated on a child safety seat in the middle of the rear seat, but was not buckled into the seat.

**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

- 23 1320/Uninc./San Bernardino. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver (mother) started to pass a vehicle, decided not to, and lost control of her vehicle when she pulled back into her lane. The vehicle left the roadway and overturned, ejecting the child.

**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

- 27☆ 1246/Los Angeles/Los Angeles. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (mother) had stopped her car in the #2 lane with its hazard flashers on because the vehicle had run out of gas. A second driver did not realize the vehicle was stopped and struck the rear of the first car.

**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/MASSIVE IMPACT**

## **AUGUST** (Continued)

- 31 ☆ 1120/Uninc./San Bernardino. **2-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (father) whose vehicle was traveling at 80 mph, swerved to avoid slower traffic and lost control of his vehicle which overturned. Unrestrained child was ejected.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

## **SEPTEMBER**

- 03 1530/Uninc./Madera. **2-YR-OLD MALE.** DUI driver lost control of his vehicle which left the roadway, struck a utility pole and overturned. Child was an unrestrained passenger in the rear seat and was ejected.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

## **OCTOBER**

- 04 1949/Compton/Los Angeles. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Speeding vehicle failed to stop for a red light and struck second vehicle. Child was riding on an adult's lap in the right front seat.  
**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**
- 08 1310/Uninc./Mendocino. **3-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver (mother) attempted to negotiate a curve in heavy rain at a speed unsafe for conditions. Vehicle spun out of control, off the road and down an embankment. The vehicle struck nose down and rolled over ejecting the child. Further investigation showed that the seat and locking clip had been improperly installed and there was too much slack in the belt which allowed to child to slip out of the seat.  
**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**
- 19 0655/Uninc./Humboldt. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver (father) was towing a 32 foot long trailer and was inexperienced at towing such a vehicle. He had not hooked up the trailer brakes and the brake fluid in his vehicle was also low. While going down a steep grade speed increased and the vehicle brakes were unable to keep the speed down. The trailer started whipping the vehicle from side to side and finally threw the towing vehicle off the road and into an embankment. The impact threw the child (riding in an unattached safety seat) into the back of the front passenger seat inflicting fatal injuries.  
**SAFETY SEAT/IMPROPER USE/PREVENTABLE**

## **NOVEMBER**

- 11 0135/Uninc./Alameda. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** DUI driver allowed his vehicle to drift off the roadway striking a utility pole.

**NO SAFETY SEAT/PREVENTABLE**

- 15☆ 1620/Uninc./Fresno. **1-YR-OLD MALE.** Driver (mother) was in the process of passing two large trucks when her vehicle's right rear tire blew out. The driver applied her brakes which sent the vehicle into the dirt median. She then over corrected and the vehicle spun into the path of the truck. The child was not in the safety seat which was present and the impact threw him out of the vehicle.

**SAFETY SEAT PRESENT BUT NOT USED/PREVENTABLE**

- 15☆ 1845/Uninc./Los Angeles. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver's vehicle was experiencing mechanical problems and she was headed to a freeway exit at 20-25 mph. A truck driver failed to recognize the slow speed of her vehicle and struck it at 55 mph inflicting fatal injuries to the child in the rear seat.

**UNKNOWN**

- 16☆ 0942/Uninc./Fresno. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** For undetermined reasons during heavy fog, a van struck a semi-truck head on inflicting fatal injuries to 11 people including the child.

**SAFETY SEAT/MASSIVE IMPACT**

- 21 1720/Uninc./Sutter. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Inexperienced driver with only an instruction permit stayed in the left lane long after passing a vehicle. When oncoming traffic approached, she swerved to the right, lost control and spun back into oncoming traffic. Her vehicle was struck broadside by that traffic. Witnesses observed the driver eating and talking just prior to the collision. Both the driver's sister and mother lost their lives in this crash.

**SAFETY SEAT/MASSIVE IMPACT**

## **DECEMBER**

- 24 1815/Uninc./Humboldt. **1-YR-OLD FEMALE.** Driver (mother) was entering a curve when she observed ice on the roadway. She applied her brakes which sent the vehicle out of control and off the roadway where it overturned and then struck a tree. The impact of the tree was to the roof of the vehicle directly above the child.

**SAFETY SEAT/MASSIVE IMPACT**